

Strategic Plan for Economic Development Northwest Arctic Borough 2003 and Forward

The mission statement for economic development, as stated by the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly, is **to promote development that is consistent, whenever possible, with the traditional culture and values of the region.** Despite the fact that traditional culture is based on a subsistence, non-cash culture, we believe that preservation of many of the values of that life-style are conducive to the economic well-being of the present and future residents of the Borough. Beyond that, our plan is focused on assisting local residents in filling a greater number of existing jobs, expanding the number of job opportunities, preparing our work force to take full advantage of those new opportunities, and reducing the cost of living within the region.

In the ten villages outside of Kotzebue (Kivalina, Noatak, Kiana, Noorvik, Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, Selawik, Buckland and Deering), 65% of the working age population does not have full-time employment at this time. These villages currently have between 15 and 45 full-time jobs available, mostly with the school, city and village governments, and local stores. Kotzebue, on the other hand, has an abundance of jobs, and there are generally from 40 to 60 vacant positions. The Red Dog Mine employs about 100 residents of the region, which represent about 20% of the mine's workforce. Commercial fishing, which has traditionally provided seasonal employment for fifty or more residents, has been dormant for the past three years due to the low market value of the region's salmon and lack of local processing. Arts and crafts provide a full-time equivalent income for less than 10 residents of the region and a supplemental income for at least 100 others. Construction jobs on a variety of projects including schools, housing, roads, and other facilities provide temporary jobs that fluctuate in number from year to year. The number of tourism-related visits to the region has declined over the last decade. In June of 2003, there were 155 open temporary assistance cases in the region and at least twice that number of food stamp recipients.

Prepare residents to fill existing job opportunities

Reduce the amount of alcohol and other substance abuse by

- Assisting villages with enforcement of local option ordinances
- Passage of a city ordinance in Kotzebue to establish an alcohol distribution center
- Improving the success rate of our alcohol treatment program
- Developing an effective community "wellness" program

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, City of Kotzebue, Maniilaq Association, and village city and tribal governments

Increase the number of qualified tradesmen by

Providing vocational education in the areas of carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, commercial driving, and heavy equipment operation and repair
Increasing the number of high school graduates

Principal sources of leadership: Alaska Technical Center/NWAB School District, State of Alaska, city and tribal governments within the region

Increase the ability of village residents to fill job vacancies in Kotzebue by

Increasing the number of affordable housing units in Kotzebue
Recruitment within the villages

Principal sources of leadership: Maniilaq Association, NIHA

Increase the number of resident placements in Red Dog Mine positions by

Identifying all specific jobs that are not filled by residents or non-resident NANA shareholders or spouses
Determining job skills/training/certifications necessary to perform those jobs
Establishing specific job training for those positions
Recruiting residents for placement in those positions

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, NANA Regional Corporation, Teck Cominco, ATC/School District, Chukchi College, State of Alaska

Increase the number of residents who are certified as teachers, accountants, health care professionals and other professional occupations by

Promoting college education
Increasing the number of high school graduates
Providing targeted post secondary education in Kotzebue
Providing scholarships for residents who attend college

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and NWAB School District, NANA Regional Corporation, Maniilaq Association, Chukchi College and major employers throughout the region

Increase the quality of public education in the region by

Increasing average daily attendance
Improving parenting skills
Increasing community involvement within the schools

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB School District, Maniilaq Association, city and tribal governments

Fully utilize Welfare To Work program by

Developing and promoting job opportunities for Temporary Assistance recipients in the villages

Principal sources of leadership: Maniilaq Manpower, individual city and IRA governments, NWAB School District, individual businesses

Create new job opportunities

Assist communities with development and implementation of comprehensive plans for local development by

Providing technical assistance with local planning efforts

Providing grant writing assistance

Providing training and support for local city and tribal administrators

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, Maniilaq Association, State Division of Community and Economic Development, Chukchi College, ATC/School District

Procure lands that provide maximum potential for future development in the Borough by

Utilizing the municipal entitlement process for selection of an additional 300,000 acres of land within the region

Principal source of leadership: NWAB

Increase the number of skilled artists in the region by

Creating consistent and reliable markets for art

Promoting high quality of art

Providing workshops instructed by highly skilled artists

Making tools and supplies accessible to residents

Creating efficient and healthy workplaces in each village

Promoting art as a source of cultural and regional pride

Principal sources of leadership in meeting these goals: NWAB, National Park Service, Chukchi College, School District

Increase the number of small businesses, including small engine repair and maintenance, building maintenance, retail outlets, restaurants, lodging, and tourist assistance by

Providing small business education

Providing start up assistance in the form of grants and loans

Providing adult basic education in the areas of accounting, computer science, customer service and small engine repair

Principal sources of leadership in meeting these goals: Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska Technical Center, NWAB School District and Chukchi College

Create seasonal jobs in the fishing industry by

Establishing a fish processing facility in Kotzebue for salmon, sheefish, whitefish and other commercially viable species

Principal sources of leadership: Northwest Arctic Borough and Bering Sea Fishermen's Association

Increase the number of tourists traveling to the region by

Promoting traditional activities among the population in order to provide an environment that will appeal to tourists

Promoting the region through publications and the internet

Providing adequate facilities and services for travelers

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and NANA Development Corporation

Add new industries to the region by

Researching and examining the feasibility of water bottling, berry products, and processing and packaging of traditional foods such as caribou and moose for consumption within the region and/or export from the region

Identifying and securing grants and loans for capitalization

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, NANA, KIC, local IRA's

Improve the region's telecommunications by

Developing a fiber optic network throughout the region

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and Maniilaq Association

Encourage further mineral development by

Developing additional transportation corridors within the region

Principal source of leadership: NWAB, State of Alaska, Federal Government

Utilize existing opportunities for government and non-government sponsored programs by

Starting HEAD START programs in Kotzebue and other villages within the region that do not offer the program

Starting Boys and Girls Clubs in villages

Increasing the number of licensed day care providers

Principal source of leadership: Maniilaq Association, NWAB, local city and tribal governments

Reduce the Cost of Living for residents

Promote at least a partial return to self-sufficiency by

Encouraging increased use of wood for fuel

Encouraging more use of gathered fish, game and berries for consumption

Promoting use of traditional clothing that is made in the region through adoption of school dress codes

Promoting walking as a means of transportation (and good health)

Discouraging consumption of commercial snack foods and drinks

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and School District, Maniilaq Association, city and village governments

Reduce the cost of bulk fuel and other cargo by

Forming partnerships to purchase fuel in large quantities

Developing competition among fuel suppliers

Developing larger storage facilities

Increasing length of airport runways to accommodate larger cargo planes

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, State of Alaska, Federal Government

Promote energy conservation by

Promoting home and facility insulation/weatherization

Developing alternative energy sources

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, NIHA, city and village governments, Maniilaq Association, KEA, State of Alaska, Federal government

